GAMA Priority Basin Project – Current Progress Update (September 2008)

The GAMA Priority Basin Project was implemented as the result of the Groundwater Quality Monitoring Act of 2001 (AB 599). The main objectives of GAMA are to improve statewide ambient groundwater quality monitoring and assessment and to increase the availability of information about groundwater quality to the public.

GAMA Priority Basins have been defined as those basins (116 of 472 DWR-defined) that account for 95% public supply wells, 99% municipal pumping, 90% agricultural pumping, 90% leaky underground tanks, 90% pesticide applications and 60% of land area in California.

The 116 GAMA priority basins have been grouped into 36 groundwater basin "study units" to facilitate the project. The GAMA Priority Basin Project is designed to operate on a 10-year monitoring cycle with 3-year trend monitoring. It is currently funded by Proposition 50 bond sales of $50 million from 2002 to 2012.

The GAMA Priority Basin Project samples wells for common contaminants as well as constituents that are not regulated. Testing for these chemical constituents (quite often at levels well below standard methods) will assist public and private groundwater stakeholders in managing this valuable resource. Some of the chemical constituents that are routinely sampled by GAMA include:

- Low-level VOCs and Pesticides
- Stable Isotopes, Deuterium, Oxygen-18
- Tritium-Helium / Noble Gases
- Emerging Contaminants:
- Potential Wastewater indicators, Pharmaceuticals, Perchlorate, 1,4-dioxane, Chromium (total and VI)
- Carbon Isotopes (C-13,C-14)
- Radon, Radium, gross alpha/beta
- Field parameters: temp, EC, DO, turbidity, pH, alkalinity
- Major ions and trace elements
- Arsenic & Iron speciation
- Nutrients - nitrate, phosphates
- Dissolved Organic Carbon
- Total and Fecal Coliform Bacteria

Currently
- Sampling has been started or completed in 27 of 36 basin group "study units"
- Over 1,600 wells have been sampled
- Over 900 well owners have participated

For more details, including a chronological list of progress and current project status.

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